

AFFIRMATION

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January 1980 --
United Methodists for
Lesbian and Gay Concerns
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HELP NEEDED AT GENERAL CONFERENCE

Richard Cash and Joan Clark, chairpersons of AFFIRMATION's General Conference Planning Committee, have begun work on coordinating the work assignments in Indianapolis April 15-25. If you are planning to attend, even for just a day, please let them know as soon as possible. Help will be needed in various areas. AFFIRMATION is planning several events intended to minister to those who will be at the General Conference. These include a worship service, a social event featuring known entertainers, a newsletter to be distributed to the delegates, a hospitality center, and an information booth. Help is needed to coordinate and carry out these functions. In addition, we will have a choir which will sing at several different events.

Also, people are needed to sit in on committees, to be available to talk with delegations and caucuses, and to meet with guests of the conference including seminary and university classes. Some of these tasks will require persons who are "out" but in many cases we simply need persons who can sit in on meetings and let the rest of us know what is happening. There is plenty to do in helping the church come to know and understand who we are as United Methodist Christians who are also Lesbians, Gay Men and their supporters.

If you are planning to attend, please write to Dick or Joan, in care of one of the co-coordinators, who will pass the letters on.

AFFIRMATION SPRING MEETING APRIL 13

The spring meeting of AFFIRMATION will be held in Indianapolis on Sunday, April 13, 1980, with the purposes of deciding upon future directions of AFFIRMATION, electing leadership for our work after General Conference, and of doing training and educational work in preparation for the General Conference. Please send your registration to one of the co-coordinators.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR AFFIRMATION

Members of the Committee on Nominations and Future Directions have begun their work. If you have input for this committee, please send it to one of the co-coordinators for forwarding. The Committee plans to meet on Saturday, April 12, just prior to the General Conference in Indianapolis.

FINANCES

Pledges and contributions to AFFIRMATION to date have brought us close to meeting our budget. We still need \$1,500 to \$2,000, however, if we are to do all that we have planned before the end of April. Gifts may be mailed to one of the co-coordinators.

GROUP INSURANCE

is now in effect for a number of AFFIRMATION people. If you are interested in this insurance plan, please write Peggy Harmon at the address below.

AFFIRMATION DIRECTORY

Michael Collins, Co-coordinator

[REDACTED]
New York, NY [REDACTED]

Peggy Harmon, Co-coordinator

[REDACTED]
Dallas, TX [REDACTED]

Ed Egan, Newsletter Editor

[REDACTED]
Haverstraw, NY [REDACTED]

Newsletter subscription is included in \$10.00 annual dues which may be mailed to one of the co-coordinators.

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BY:

GENERAL CONFERENCE AFFIRMATION is working on four major issues which directly affect the lives of Lesbians and Gay men which are expected to be decided at the United Methodist General Conference April 15-25.

1. We are calling for changes in language in the Social Principles which is derogatory of Lesbians and Gay men. In 1972 the General Conference passed a statement in paragraph 71 of the Discipline which calls for civil rights for homosexuals and then goes on to state, "though we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching." The statement was adopted in a moment of political confusion generated by a climate of fear. Since then many Lesbians and Gay men in the UMC have suffered greatly with that sentence used as justification for oppression. No other statement in the Social Principles is used with the kind of vindictiveness as is this sentence which is based upon stereotypes and untruths. It is essential that this sentence be deleted if the UMC is to enter into a reconciling and loving ministry with our people.

2. We are calling for the deletion of paragraph 906.13 which prohibits the boards and agencies of the UMC from using funds "to promote the acceptance of homosexuality" or support gay causes. This particular paragraph has been used repeatedly to silence and oppress persons who are seeking to know more about God's will in their lives (such as through the dismissal of openly gay persons from Garret and Iliff, and the firing of Joan Clark) as well as persons who have sought ways to be in caring ministries with our people (such as five churches in Indianapolis refusing to allow AFFIRMATION to hold a public worship service in UM churches). This paragraph has been used for too long as a club to create fear and to destroy lives and careers.

3. Attempts will be made at the General Conference to specifically prohibit the ordination of openly gay persons, and calling for the dismissal of clergy (and perhaps staff persons) who "come out" and/or are "discovered" as gay. Such attempts are specifically designed to tie the hands of Conference Boards of Ministry where the processes of affirming a candidate's call into the ministry and evaluating a person's "gifts and graces" have traditionally been held. We are firmly opposed to the inclusion of such "witch-hunt" and potentially "lavendar-baiting" resolutions in the discipline of our church. Though the process will be slow and often painful for particular Lesbians and Gay men who seek ordination or who are already ministers in the church, we do have faith that the more open and caring methods we have traditionally developed for calling persons into the ministry will best serve the whole church in coming to know and understand Christian stands in relationship to one's sexuality and gifts for service in the ministry.

4. There will probably be much discussion at this General Conference about some kind of study of sexuality. We affirm that the church has a need to examine sexuality issues and desire the examination of issues related to our people within the context of a broader sexuality study. At the same time we will be cautious of attempts to skirt the issues related to homosexuality under such broad titles and definitions as "human sexuality". We believe that United Methodists expect the leadership of their church to be forthright rather than devious at our expense, in matters that are of great and grave concern to them as well as to us. These proposed studies will need to be watched carefully as they are being shaped at the General Conference.

In addition to these major concerns, AFFIRMATION will also be following a number of petitions which relate to our lives within the United Methodist Church.

JAN '80 AFFUM -

Some people are *not* getting the message.



ANOTHER GREAT YEAR OF

INSIGHT:

A Quarterly of Lesbian/Gay Christian Opinion

COMING UP!

Fall, 1979

HOMOSEXUAL LOVE: An Explanation/An Exploration - Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, along with Malcolm Boyd and Brian McNaught search to find what homosexual love is in the light of Christian teaching.

Winter, 1980

BEING THE CHURCH! Its time to take our place in the Church Rev. Ellen Barrett says in this issue, joined by Fr. John Ranallo and Rev. Michael Collins, they map out positive gay Christian action.

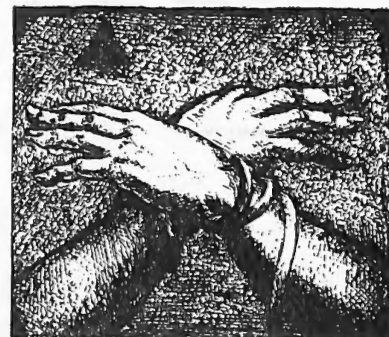
Spring, 1980

THE GAY GHETTO: A Place, A State of Mind, A Spiritual Crisis - The gay ghetto as 'closet No. 2'. An Episcopal priest, a Catholic psychologist, and a Lutheran Minister look at the scene and come up with some insightful answers.

Summer, 1980

HOMOSEXUAL HOMOPHOBIA IN THE CHURCHES - Homosexual clergy and religious in places of influence in the Christian churches are deliberately contributing to the defeat of gay efforts at positive action in the churches. Why? How can gay Christians combat this?

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INSIGHT: A Quarterly of Lesbian/Gay Christian Opinion is a member of the Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers (COSMEP).

INSIGHT: A Quarterly of Lesbian/Gay Christian Opinion draws its editorial staff and contributors from the membership of gay and lesbian Christian groups. INSIGHT: is published quarterly for the enlightenment of the non-gay community and for the advancement of ministries to the gay and lesbian Christian community; to make the gay experience understandable, and to elicit concerned and responsible approaches to issues of human sexuality within the churches and throughout society. \$2.00 per copy, \$8.00 a year, \$11.00 US funds outside the USA.

AFFIRMATION HOUSING REQUEST

Send to: Housing Coordinator, [REDACTED] Indianapolis, In.

YES! I am planning to participate in Affirmation's effort at General Conference, and I need housing as indicated below:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Arrival Date _____ Time _____ Departure Date _____

My Housing needs:

_____ One bed in a double room for _____ nights at \$6 (\$7 after 2/15/80). Sharing with _____
(a roommate will be assigned if you don't indicate one here)

_____ A private room for _____ nights at \$12 (\$14 after 2/15/80).

_____ I am staying for all of General Conference and would like housing in a private home.

Payment in full (non-refundable after 2/15/80) is enclosed to obtain the special rate. Amount enclosed \$_____.

or

_____ I will pay \$_____ by 2/15/80 to obtain the special rate.

or

_____ I do not wish to pay the full amount in advance. Payment for _____ nights is enclosed as a deposit (refundable until 4/1/80). The special rate of \$6 (double occupancy) or \$12 (private room) is not available.

Housing will be in comfortable dormitory rooms at St. Maur Theological Center, located about 15 minutes from downtown in northwest Indianapolis. Bathroom facilities are communal type. Housing is available from noon Sunday April 13 through noon Saturday April 26.